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possibilities by material want. The most important social message of Marxism is that freedom has material preconditions; we must survive in order to live. With the development of a technology that could not have been conceived by the wildest science-fiction of Marx's day, the possibilities of a post-scarcity society now lies before us. All the institutions of propertied society–the class rule, hierarchy, the patriarchal family, bureaucracy, the city, the state–have been exhausted. Today, decentralization is not only desirable as a means of restoring the human scale; it becomes necessary to recreate a viable ecology, to preserve life on this planet from destructive pollutants, soil erosion, the perpetuation of a breathable atmosphere, the balance of nature. The promotion of spontaneity is necessary if the social revolution is to place each individual in control of his everyday life.

The old forms of struggle do not totally disappear but they are being transcended in the decomposition of class society by the issues of a classless society. There can be no social revolution without winning the workers; hence, they must have our active solidarity in every struggle they wage against exploitation. We fight against social crimes wherever they appear–and industrial exploitation is a profound social crime.

But so are racism, the denial of a people's right to self-determination, imperialism, poverty profound social crimes–and for that matter pollution, rampant urbanization, the malignant socialization of the young, and sexual repression. We do not make "alliances;" to the contrary, we try to destroy the very barriers–be they class, cultural, institutional, or psychological–that make alliances a necessity. The preconditions for the existance of the bourgeoisie is the development of the proletariat. Capitalism as a social system presupposes the existence of *both* classes and is perpetuated by the development of both classes. We begin to undermine the premises of class rule to the degree that we foster the declassifying of the non-bourgeois classes, at least institutionally, psychologically, and culturally.

For the first time in history, the anarchic phase that opened all the great revolutions of the past can be preserved as a permanent condition by the advanced technology of our time. The anarchic institutions of that phase–the assemblies, the factory committees, the action committees, can be stabilized as the elements of a liberated society, as the elements of a new system of self-management. Will we build a movement that can defend them? Can we create an organization of affinity groups that is capable of dissolving into these revolutionary institutions? Or will we build a hierarchical, centralized, bureaucratic party that will try to dominate them, supplant them and finally destroy them?

Listen Marxist: the organization we try to build is the kind of society our revolution will create. Either we will shed the past–in ourselves, as well as in our groups–or there will simply be no future to win.

Anarchos, May 1969.

LISTEN, MARXIST!

All the old crap of the thirties is coming back again: the shit about the "class analysis," the "role of the working class," the "trained cadres," the "vanguard party," and the "proletarian dictatorship." It's all back again, and in a more vulgarized form than ever. Progressive Labor is not the only example; it is merely the worst. One smells the same shit in the chapter meetings, labor committees, the National Office of S.D.S., in the various Marxist and Socialist clubs on campuses, not to speak of the "Militant Labor Forum," the Independent Socialist Clubs, and Youth Against War and Fascism.

In the thirties, at least, it was understandable. The United States was paralyzed by a chronic economic crisis, the deepest and longest in its history. The only living forces that seemed to be battering at the walls of capitalism were the great organizing drives of the C.I.O., with their dramatic sitdown strikes, their radical militancy, and their bloody clashes with the police. The political atmosphere throughout the entire world was charged by the electricity of the Spanish Civil War, the last of the classical workers' revolutions, when every radical sect in the American Left could identify with its own militia columns in Madrid and Barcelona. That was thirty years ago. It was a time when anyone who cried out "Make Love, Not War" would have been regarded as a freak; the cry, then, was "Make Jobs, Not War"–the cry of an age burdened by scarcity, when the achievement of socialism entailed "sacrifices" and a long "transition period" to an economy of material abundance. To an eighteen-year-old kid in 1937 the very concept of cybernation would have seemed like the wildest science fiction, a fantasy comparable to visions of space travel. That eighteen-year-old kid has now reached fifty years of age today, and his roots are planted in an era so remote as to differ *qualitatively* from the realities of the present period in the United States. Even capitalism itself has changed since then, taking on increasingly statified forms that could be anticipated only dimly thirty years ago. And now we are being asked to go back to the "class analyses," the "strategies," the "cadres" and organizational forms of that distant period in almost blatant disregard of the new issues and possibilities that have emerged.

When the hell are we finally going to create a movement that looks to the future instead of to the past? When will we begin to learn from what is being born instead of what is dying? Marx, to his lasting credit, tried to do that in his own day; he tried to evoke a futuristic spirit in the revolutionary movement of the 1840's and 1850's. "The tradition of all the dead generations weighs like a nightmare on the brain of the living," he wrote in *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*. "And just when they seem to be engaged in revolutionizing themselves and things, in creating something entirely new, precisely in such epochs of revolutionary crisis they anxiously conjure up the spirits of the past to their service and borrow from them names, battle slogans and

costumes in order to present the new scene of world history in this time-honored disguise and borrowed language. Thus Luthur donned the mask of the Apostle Paul, the Revolution of 1789 to 1814 draped itself alternately as the Roman Republic and the Roman Empire, and the Revolution of 1848 knew nothing better than to parody, in turn, 1789 and the tradition of 1793 to 1795 The social revolution of the nineteenth century cannot draw its poetry from the past, but only from the future. It cannot begin with itself, before it has stripped off all superstition in regard to the past In order to arrive at its content, the revolution of the nineteenth century must let the dead bury their dead. There the phrase went beyond the content; here the content goes beyond the phrase."

Is the problem any different today, as we approach the twenty-first century? Once again the dead are walking in our midst—ironically, draped in the name of Marx, the man who tried to bury the dead of the nineteenth century. So the revolution of our own day can do nothing better than parody, in turn, the October Revolution of 1917 and the Civil War of 1918-1920, with its "class analysis," its Bolshevik Party, its "proletarian dictatorship," its puritanical morality, and even its slogan of "soviet power." The complete, all-sided revolution of our own day that can finally resolve the historic "social question," born of scarcity, domination, and hierarchy, follows the tradition of the partial, the incomplete, the one-sided revolutions of the past, which merely changed the form of the "social question," replacing one system of domination and hierarchy by another. At a time when bourgeois society itself is in the process of disintegrating all the social classes that once gave it stability, we hear the hollow echoes of the "class analysis." At a time when all the political institutions of hierarchical society are entering a period of profound decay, we hear the hollow echoes of the "political party" and the "workers' state." At a time when hierarchy as such is being brought into question, we hear the hollow echoes of "cadres," "vanguards," and "leaders." At a time when centralization and the State have been brought to the most explosive point of historical negativity, we hear the hollow echoes of a "centralized movement" and a "proletarian dictatorship."

This pursuit for security in the past, this attempt to find a haven in a fixed dogma and an organizational hierarchy—all as substitutes for creative thought and praxis—is bitter evidence of how little many "revolutionaries" are capable of "revolutionizing themselves and things," much less of revolutionizing society as a whole. The deep-rooted conservatism of the P.L. "revolutionaries" is almost painfully evident: the authoritarian Party replaces the authoritarian Family; the authoritarian Leader and Hierarchy replaces the Patriarch and School Bureaucracy; the Discipline of the Movement replaces the Discipline of Bourgeois Society; the authoritarian code of Political Obedience replaces the State; the credo of "Proletarian Morality" replaces the mores of Puritanism and the Work Ethic. The old substance of exploitative society reappears in new forms, draped in a red flag, decorated by portraits of Mao (or Castro or Che) and the little "Red Book" and other sacred litanies.

The majority of people who remain in P.L., today, deserve it. If they can live with a movement that cynically dubs its own slogans into photographs of DRUM pickets; if they can read a magazine that asks whether Marcuse is a "cop-out or cop;" if they can accept a "discipline" that reduces them to poker-faced, programmed automata; if they can use the most disgusting techniques

party. Anarchist communists do not seek to rear a state structure over these popular revolutionary organs but, on the contrary, to dissolve all the organizational forms developed in the pre-revolutionary period (including their own) into these genuine revolutionary organs.

These differences with the Bolshevik-type parties are decisive. Despite their rhetoric and slogans, the Russian Bolsheviks never believed in the soviets; they regarded them as instruments of the Bolshevik Party, an attitude which the French Trotskyists faithfully duplicated in their relations with the Sorbonne students' assembly, the French Maoists with the C.G.T., and P.L. with S.D.S. By 1921, the soviets were virtually dead and all decisions were made by the Bolshevik Central Committee, and Political Bureau. Not only do anarchist communists seek to prevent Marxist parties from repeating this again; they also wish to prevent their own organization from playing a similar role. Accordingly, they have tried to prevent bureaucracy, hierarchy, and elites from emerging in their midst. No less important, they attempt to *remake themselves*; to root out from their own personalities those authoritarin traits and elitist propensities that are assimilated in propertied society almost from birth. The concern of the anarchist movement with life style is not merely a preoccupation with their own integrity, but with the integrity of the revolution itself.*

In the midst of all the confusing ideological cross-currents of our time, one question must always remain in the foreground: what the hell are we trying to make a revolution for? Are we trying to make a revolution to recreate hierarchy again, dangling a shadowy dream of future freedom before the eyes of humanity? Is it to promote further technological advance, to create an even greater abundance of goods than exists today? Is it to "get even" with the bourgeoisie? Is it to bring P.L. to power? Or the Communist Party? Or the Socialist Workers Party? Is it to emancipate abstractions such as "The Proletariat," "The People," "History," "Society"?

Or is it to finally dissolve hierarchy, class rule, coercion—*to make it possible for each individual to gain control of his every day life?* Is it to make each moment as marvelous as it could be and the life span of each individual an utterly fulfilling experience? If the true purpose of revolution is to bring the Neanderthal men of P.L. to power, it is not worth making. We need hardly argue the inane questions of whether individual development can be severed from social and communal development; obviously the two go together. The basis for the whole man is a rounded society; the basis for the free man is the free society.

These issues aside, however, we are still faced with the question that Marx raised in 1850: when will we begin to take our poetry from the future instead of the past? The dead must be permitted to bury the dead. Marxism is dead because it was rooted in an era of material scarcity, limited in its

*It is this goal, we may add, that motivates anarchist Dadaism—the anarchist flipout—that produces the creases of consternation on the wooden faces of P.L. types. The "anarchist flipout" attempts to shatter the internal values inherited from hierarchical society, to explode the rigidities instilled by the bourgeois socialization process. In short it is an attempt to break down the superego that exercises such a paralyzing effect upon spontaneity, imagination, and sensibility; indeed to restore a sense of desire, possibility, the marvelous—of revolution as a liberating joyous festival.

deep historical processes. No Central Committee "makes" a social revolution; at best it can stage a *coup d'etat*, replacing one hierarchy by another–or worse, arrest a revolutionary process if it exercises any widespread influence. A Central Committee is an organ for acquiring power, for *recreating* power, for gathering to itself what the "masses" have achieved by their own revolutionary efforts. One must be blind to all that has happened over the past two centuries not to recognize these essential facts.

In the past, Marxists could make an intelligible, although not a valid, claim for the need for a centralized party, because the anarchic phase of the revolution was vitiated by material scarcity. Economically, the "masses" were always compelled to return to a daily life of toil. The revolution closed at "nine o'clock" quite aside from the reactionary intentions of the Girondins of 1793; it was arrested by the low level of technology. Today, even this excuse has been removed by the development of a post-scarcity technology notably in the U.S. and western Europe. A point has now been reached where the masses can begin, almost overnight, to expand drastically the "realm of freedom" in the Marxian sense–to acquire the leisure time needed to achieve the highest degree of self-management.

What the May-June events in France demonstrated was not the need for a centralized, Bolshevik type party (these parties exist in profusion and they lagged behind the event) but the need for *greater consciousness* among the "masses." Paris demonstrated that an organization is needed to systematically propagate ideas–and not ideas alone, but *ideals* which *promote the concept of self-management*. What the French "masses" lacked was not a Central Committee of a Lenin to "organize" or "command" them, but the conviction that they could have *operated* the factories instead of merely occupying them. It is noteworthy that *not a single Bolshevik-type party in France raised the demand of self-management*; the demand was raised only by the anarchists and the Situationists.

There is a need for a revolutionary organization–but its function must always be kept clearly in mind. Its first task is propaganda, to "patiently explain" as Lenin put it. In a revolutionary situation, the revolutionary organization presents the most advanced demands: it is prepared at every turn of events to formulate–in the most concrete fashion–the immediate task that should be performed to advance the revolutionary process. It provides the boldest elements in action and in the decision-making organs of the revolution.

In what way then, do anarchist communist groups differ from the Bolshevik-type party? Certainly not on such issues as the need for organization, planning, coordination, propaganda in all its forms or the need for a social program. Fundamentally, they differ from the Bolshevik-type party in their belief that genuine revolutionaries must function *within the framework of the forms created by the revolution*, not within the forms created by the party. What this means is that their commitment is to the revolutionary organs of self-management, not the revolutionary "organization"; to the *social* forms, not the *political* forms. Anarchist communists seek to persuade the factory committees, assemblies, or soviets, to make themselves into *genuine organs of popular self-management*, not dominate them, manipulate them, and hitch them to an all-knowing political

(techniques borrowed from the cesspool of bourgeois business operations and parliamentarism) to manipulate other organizations; if they can parasitize virtually every action and situation to merely promote the growth of their Party–even if this means defeat for the action itself–they are beneath contempt. For these people to call themselves "Reds" and describe attacks upon them as "Red-Baiting" is a form of McCarthyism in reverse. To rephrase Trotsky's juicy description of Stalinism, they are the syphilis of the radical youth movement today. And for syphilis there is only one treatment–an antibiotic, not an argument.

Our concern, here, is with those honest revolutionaries who have turned to Marxism, Leninism, or Trotskyism because they earnestly seek a coherent social outlook and an effective strategy of revolution. We are also concerned with those who are awed by the theoretical armamentorium of Marxist ideology and are disposed to flirt with it in the absence of more systematic alternatives. To these people we address ourselves as brothers and sisters and ask for a serious discussion and comprehensive re-evaluation. We believe that Marxism has ceased to be applicable to our time not because it is too visionary or revolutionary, but because it is not visionary or revolutionary enough. We believe it was born of an era of scarcity and presented a brilliant critique of that era, specifically its industrial capitalist form; that a new era is in birth which Marxism does not adequately encompass and whose outlines it only partially and one-sidely anticipated. We argue the problem is not so much to "abandon" Marxism or to "annul" it, but to dialectically transcend it, just as Marx transcended Hegelian philosophy, Ricardian economics, and Blanquist tactics and modes of organization. We shall argue that in a more advanced stage of capitalism than Marx dealt with a century ago and in a more advanced stage of technological development than Marx could have clearly anticipated, a new critique is necessary, which in turn yields new modes of struggle, of organization, of propaganda, and of life-style. Call these new modes of struggle, organization, propaganda, and life-style, whatever you will, even "Marxism" if the word hangs on your lips like a scab. We have chosen to call these new approaches Post-Scarcity Anarchy, for a number of compelling reasons which will become evident in the pages that follow.

THE HISTORICAL LIMITS OF MARXISM

The idea that a man, whose greatest theoretical contributions were made between 1840 and 1880, could "foresee" the entire dialectic of capitalism is, on the face of it, utterly preposterous. If we can still learn much from Marx's insights, we can learn even more from the inescapable errors of any man who was limited temporally by an era of material scarcity and a technology that barely involved the use of electric power. We can learn how different our own era is from that of *all* past history, how qualitatively new are the potentialities that confront us, how unique are the issues, analyses, and praxis that stand before us if we are to make a revolution–and not another historical abortion.

The problem is not that Marxism is a "method" which must be reapplied to "new situations" or that a "neo-Marxism" has to be developed to overcome the limitations of "classical Marxism." The attempt to rescue the Marxian pedigree by emphasizing the method over the system or by

adding "neo" to a sacred word is sheer mystification if all the *practical* conclusions of the system flatly contradict these efforts.* Yet this is precisely the state of affairs in Marxian exegesis today. Marxists lean on the fact that the system provides a brilliant interpretation of the past, while willfully ignoring its utterly misleading features in dealing with the present and future. They cite the coherence that historical materialism and the class analysis give to the interpretation of history, the economic insights *Capital* provides into the development of industrial capitalism, the brilliance of Marx's analysis of earlier revolutions and the tactical conclusions he established, without once recognizing that qualitatively new problems have arisen which never existed in his day. Is it conceivable that historical problems and methods of class analysis, based entirely on unavoidable scarcity, can be transplanted over to a new era of potential abundance, indeed, of overwhelming material superfluity? Is it conceivable that an economic analysis, focused primarily on a "freely competitive" system of industrial capitalism, can be transferred over to a managed system of capitalism, where State and monopoly combine to manipulate economic life? Is it conceivable that a strategic and tactical armamentorium, formulated in a period when coal and steel constituted the basis of industrial technology, can be transferred over to an age based on radically new sources of energy, on electronics, on cybernation?

The result is that a theoretical corpus which was liberating a century ago, is turned into a straitjacket today. We are asked to focus on the working class as the "agent" of revolutionary change at a time when capitalism visibly antagonizes and produces revolutionaries in virtually all strata of society, particularly among the young. We are asked to guide our tactical methods by the vision of a "chronic economic crisis" despite the fact that no such crisis has been in the offing for thirty years.† We are asked to accept a "proletarian dictatorship"—a long "transitional period" whose function is not merely the suppression of counterrevolutionaries but above all the development of a technology of abundance—at a time when a technology of abundance is at hand. We are asked to orient our "strategies" and "tactics" around poverty and material immiseration at a time when revolutionary sentiment is being generated by the banality of life under conditions of material abundance. We are asked to establish political parties, centralized organizations, "revolutionary" hierarchies and elites, and a new State at a time when political institutions as such are decaying and when centralization, hierarchy, elitism, and the State are being brought into question

*Marxism is above all a theory of praxis, or to place this relationship in its correct perspective, a praxis of theory. This is the very meaning of Marx's transformation of dialectics from the subjective dimension (to which the Young Hegelians still tried to confine Hegel's outlook) into the objective, from philosophical critique into social action. If theory and praxis become divorced, Marxism is not killed; it commits suicide. This is its most admirable and noble feature. The attempts of the cretins who follow in Marx's wake to keep the system alive with a patchwork of emendations, exegesis, and above all, a half-ass "scholarship" *a la* Maurice Dobb and George Novack, are degrading insults to Marx's name and a disgusting pollution of everything he stood for.

†It is fascinating to note that Marxists do very little talking about the "chronic [economic] crisis of capitalism" these days—despite the fact that this concept forms the focal point of Marx's economic theories.

only because the subject has been obscured by an appalling amount of rubbish. Anarchists, or at least anarchist communists, accept the need for organization.* It should be as absurd to have to repeat this point as to argue over whether Marx accepted the need for social revolution.

The real question at issue here, is not organization versus non-organization, but rather, what *kind* of organization the anarchist communists try to establish. What the different kinds of anarchist communist organizations have in common is that they are developed organically from below, not engineered into existance from above. They are social movements, combining a creative revolutionary life-style with a creative revolutionary theory, not political parties, whose mode of life is indistinguishable from the surrounding bourgeois environment and whose ideology is reduced to rigid "tried and tested programs." They try to reflect as much as is humanly possible the liberated society they seek to achieve, not slavishly duplicate the prevailing system of hierarchy, class and authority. They are built around intimate groups of brothers and sisters—affinity groups—whose ability to act in common is based on initiative, on convictions freely arrived at and a deep personal involvement, not a bureaucratic apparatus fleshed out by a docile membership and manipulated from above by a handful of all-knowing leaders.

The anarchist communists do not deny the need for coordination between groups, for discipline, for meticulous planning, and unity in action. But they believe that coordination, discipline, planning and unity in action must be achieved *voluntarily*, by means of a self-discipline nourished by conviction and understanding, not by coercion and a mindless, unquestioning obedience to orders from above. They seek to achieve the effectiveness imputed to centralism by means of voluntarism and insight, not by establishing a hierarchichical, centralized structure. Depending upon needs or circumstances, affinity groups can achieve this effectiveness through assemblies, action committees, and local, regional or national conferences. But they vigorously oppose the establishment of an organizational structure that becomes an end in itself, of committees that linger on after their practical tasks have been completed, of a "leadership" that reduces the "revolutionary" to a mindless robot.

These conclusions are not the result of flighty "individualistic" impulses; quite to the contrary, they emerge from an exacting study of past revolutions, of the impact centralized parties have had on the revolutionary process and the nature of social change in an era of potential material abundance. Anarchist communists *seek to preserve and extend the anarchic phase that opens all the great social revolutions*. Even more than Marxists, they recognize that revolutions are produced by

*The term "anarchist" is a generic word, like the term "socialist" and there are probably as many different kinds of anarchists as there are socialists. In both cases, the spectrum ranges from individuals whose views derive from an extension of liberalism (the "individualist anarchists," the Social Democrats) to revolutionary communists (the anarchist communists, the revolutionary Marxists, Leninists, and Trotskyists). In speaking of anarchists, here, we refer to the anarchist communists, not followers of Max Stirner or admirers of Paul Goodman. The differences between anarchist communists and reformist or individualist schools are as sharp as those between reformist socialists and revolutionary communists.

to a lifetime of toil and rarely were they free to establish organs of self-management that could last beyond the revolution.

Anarchists such as Bakunin and Kropotkin, however, were by no means wrong in criticizing Marx for his emphasis on centralism and his elitist notions of organization. Was centralism absolutely necessary for technological advances in the past? Was the nation-state indispensable to the expansion of commerce? Did the workers' movement benefit by the emergence of highly centralized economic enterprises and the "indivisible" State? We tend to accept these tenets of Marxism too uncritically, largely because capitalism developed within a centralized political arena. The anarchists of the last century warned that Marx's centralistic approach, insofar as it affected the events of the time, would so strengthen the bourgeoisie and the State apparatus that this development would make the overthrow of capitalism extremely difficult. The revolutionary party, by duplicating these centralistic, hierarchical features, would reproduce hierarchy and centralism in the post-revolutionary society.

Bakunin, Kropotkin, and Malatesta were not so naive as to believe that anarchy could be established overnight. In imputing this notion to Bakunin, Marx and Engels willfully distorted the Russian anarchist's views. Nor did the anarchists of the last century believe that the abolition of the State involved "laying down arms" immediately after the revolution, to use Marx's obscurantist choice of terms, and which Lenin thoughtlessly repeated in *State and Revolution*. Indeed, much that passes for "Marxism" in *State and Revolution* is pure anarchism: the substitution of revolutionary militias for professional armed bodies, the substitution of organs of self-management for parliamentary bodies. What is authentically Marxist in Lenin's pamphlet is the demand for "strict centralism," the acceptance of a "new" bureaucracy, the identification of soviets with a State.

The anarchists of the last century were deeply preoccupied with the question of achieving industrialization without crushing the revolutionary spirit of the "masses" and rearing new obstacles to emancipation. They feared that centralization would reinforce the ability of the bourgeoisie to resist the revolution and instill in the workers a sense of obedience. They tried to rescue all those precapitalist communal forms (such as the Russian *mir* and the Spanish *pueblo*) which might provide a springboard to a free society, not only in a structural sense but also a spiritual one.

Hence they emphasized the need for decentralization even under capitalism. In contrast to the Marxian parties, their organizations gave considerable attention to what they called "integral education"—the development of the *whole* man—to counteract the debasing and banalizing influence of bourgeois society. The anarchists tried to live by the values of the future to the extent that this was possible under capitalism. They believed in direct action in order to foster the initiative of the "masses," to preserve the spirit of revolt, to encourage spontaneity. They tried to develop organizations based on mutual aid and brotherhood, in which control would be exercised from below upward, not from above downward.

We must pause, here, to examine the nature of anarchist organizational forms in some detail if

on a scale that has never occurred before in the history of propertied society.

We are asked, in short, to return to the past, to diminish instead of grow, to force the throbbing reality of our times with its hopes and promises into the deadening preconceptions of an outlived age. We are asked to operate with principles that have been transcended not only theoretically but by the very development of society itself. History has not stood still since Marx, Engels, Lenin, and Trotsky died; nor has it followed the simplistic direction which was charted out by thinkers—however brilliant—whose minds were still rooted in the nineteenth century or the opening years of the twentieth. We have seen capitalism itself perform many of the tasks (the development of a technology of abundance) which were imputed to socialism; we have seen it "nationalize" property, merging the economy with the State wherever necessary. We have seen the working class neutralized as the "agent of revolutionary change," albeit still struggling within a *bourgeois* framework for more wages, shorter hours, and "fringe" benefits. The class struggle in the classical sense has not disappeared; it has suffered a more deadening fate by being co-opted into capitalism. The revolutionary struggle within the advanced capitalist countries has shifted to a historically new terrain: a struggle between a generation of youth that has known no chronic economic crisis and the culture, values, and institutions of an older, conservative generation whose perspective on life has been shaped by scarcity, guilt, renunciation, the work ethic, and the pursuit of material security. Our enemies are not only the visibly entrenched bourgeoisie and the State apparatus but also an outlook which finds its support in liberals, Social Democratic types, the minions of a corrupt mass media, the "revolutionary" parties of the past, and, painful as it may be to the acolytes of Marxism, the worker dominated by the factory hierarchy, by the industrial routine, and by the work ethic. The point is that the divisions now cut across virtually all the traditional class lines and they raise a spectrum of problems that none of the Marxists, leaning on analogies with scarcity societies, could foresee.

THE MYTH OF THE PROLETARIAT

Let us cast aside all the ideological debris of the past and cut to the theoretical roots of the problem. For our age, Marx's greatest contribution to revolutionary thought is his dialectic of social development: the great movement from primitive communism, through private property, to communism in its highest form—a communal society resting on a liberatory technology. According to Marx, man thus passes from the domination of man by nature, to the domination of man by man, and finally to the domination of nature by man and the elimination of social domination as such.* Within this larger dialectic, Marx examines the dialectic of capitalism itself—a social system which constitutes the last historical "stage" in the domination of man by man. Here, Marx makes not only profound contributions to the thought of our time (particularly in his brilliant analysis of the commodity relationship) but also exhibits those limitations of time and place that play so

*For ecological reasons, we do not accept the notion of the "domination of nature by man" in the simplistic sense that it was passed on by Marx a century ago. For a discussion of this problem, see "Ecology and Revolutionary Thought" in *Anarchos* no. 1.

confining a role in our own time.

The most serious of these limitations emerges from Marx's attempt to explain the transition from capitalism to socialism, from a class society to a classless society. It is vitally important to emphasize that this explanation was reasoned out almost entirely by analogy with the transition of feudalism to capitalism–that is, *from one class society to another class society*, indeed, from one system of property to another. Accordingly, Marx points out that just as the bourgeoisie developed within feudalism as a result of the split between town and country (more precisely, between crafts and agriculture), so the modern proletariat developed within capitalism with the advance of industrial technology. Both classes, we are told, develop social interests of their own–indeed, revolutionary social interests that throw them against the old society in which they were spawned. If the bourgeoisie gained control over economic life long before it overthrew feudal society, the proletariat, in turn, gains its own revolutionary power by the fact that it is "disciplined, united, organized" by the factory system.* In both cases, the development of the productive forces becomes incompatible with the traditional system of social relations. "The integument is burst asunder." The old society is replaced by the new.

The critical question we face is this: can we explain the transition from a class society to a classless society by means of the same dialectic that accounts for the transition of one class society to another? This is not a textbook problem that involves the juggling of logical abstractions but a very real and concrete issue for our time. There are profound differences between the development of the bourgeoisie under feudalism and of the proletariat under capitalism which Marx either failed to anticipate or never faced with clarity. The bourgeoisie controlled economic life long before it took State power; it had become the dominant class materially, culturally, and ideologically before it asserted its dominance politically. The proletariat does not control economic life. Despite its indispensable role in the industrial process, the industrial working class is not even the majority of the population and its strategic economic position is being eroded by cybernation and other technological advances.† Hence it requires an act of high consciousness for the proletariat to use the

*It is ironical that all the Marxists who talk about the "economic power" of the proletariat are actually echoing the position of the anarchosyndicalists, a position that Marx bitterly opposed. Marx was not concerned with the "economic power" of the proletariat but with its *political* power: notably, the fact that it would become the majority of the population. He was convinced that the *industrial* workers would be driven to revolution primarily by material destitution which would follow from the tendency of capitalist accumulation; that, *organized* by the factory system and disciplined by the industrial routine, they would be able to constitute trade unions and, above all, political parties, which in some countries would be obliged to use insurrectionary methods and in others (notably, England, the United States, and in later years Engels added France) might well come to power in elections and legislate socialism into existence. Characteristically, many Marxists have been as dishonest with their Marx and Engels as P.L. has been with the readers of "Challenge," leaving important observations untranslated or grossly distorting the meaning and reasons why Marx developed conclusions of this kind.

†This is as good a place as any to dispose of the notion that a "proletarian" is reducible to anyone

Once this is grasped it is possible to place Marx's theoretical legacy in meaningful perspective–to separate its rich contributions from its historically limited, indeed, paralyzing shackles on our own time. The Marxian dialectic, the many seminal insights provided by historical materialism, the superb critique of the commodity relationship, many elements of the economic theories, the theory of alienation, and above all, the notion that freedom has material preconditions–these are lasting contributions to revolutionary thought.

By the same token, Marx's emphasis on the industrial proletariat as the "agent" of revolutionary change, his "class analysis" in explaining the transition from a class to a classless society, his concept of the proletarian dictatorship, his emphasis on centralism, his theory of the capitalist development which tends to jumble state capitalism with socialism, his advocacy of political action through electoral parties–those and many related concepts are false in the context of our time and were misleading, as we shall see, even in his own day. They emerge from the limitations of his vision, more properly, from the limitations of his time. They make sense only if one remembers that Marx regarded capitalism as historically progressive, as an indispensable stage to the development of socialism, and they have practical applicability only to a time when Germany in particular was confronted by bourgeois-democratic tasks and national unification. In taking this retrospective approach, we are not trying to say that Marx was correct in holding this approach–merely, that the approach makes sense when viewed in its time and place.

Just as the Russian Revolution included a subterranean movement of the "masses" which conflicted with Bolshevism, so there is a subterranean movement in history which conflicted with all systems of authority. This movement has entered into our time under the name of "anarchism," although it has never been encompassed by a single ideology or body of sacred texts. Anarchism is a libidinal movement of humanity against coercion in any form, reaching back in time to the very emergence of propertied society, class rule, and the State. From this period onward, the oppressed have resisted all forms that seek to imprison the spontaneous development of social order. By whatever name men chose to call it, anarchism surged to the foreground in the social arena in periods of major transition from one historical era to another. The decline of the ancient and feudal world witnessed the upsurge of mass movements, in some cases, wildly Dionysian in character, that demanded an end to all systems of authority, privilege, and coercion.

The anarchic movements of the past failed largely because material scarcity, a function of the low level of technology, vitiated an organic harmonization of human interests. Any society that could promise little more materially than equality of poverty invariably engendered deep-seated tendencies to restore a new system of privilege. In the absence of a technology that could appreciably reduce the working day, the need to work vitiated social institutions based on self-management. The Girondins of the French Revolution shrewdly recognized that they could use the working day against revolutionary Paris. To exclude radical elements from the sections, they tried to enact legislation which would end all assembly meetings before 9 P.M., the hour when Parisian workers returned from their jobs. Indeed, it was not only the manipulative techniques and the treachery of the "vanguard" organizations that brought the anarchic phase of past revolutions to an end; it was also the material limits of past eras. The "masses" were always compelled to return

The theme reappears continually in later years. With the outbreak of the Franco-Prussian War, for example, Marx writes to Engels: "The French need a thrashing. If the Prussians win, the centralization of *state power* is useful to the centralization of the German working class."

Marx and Engels were not centralists, however, because they believed in the virtues of centralism per se. Quite to the contrary: both Marxism and anarchism have always agreed that a liberated, communist society entails sweeping decentralization, the dissolution of bureaucracy, the abolition of the State, and the break-up of the large cities. "Abolition of the antithesis between town and country is not merely possible," notes Engels in *Anti-Duhring*. "It has become a direct necessity . . . the present poisoning of the air, water and land can be put to an end only by the fusion of town and country" To Engels, this involves "As uniform a distribution of the population over the whole country"–in short, the physical decentralization of the cities.

The origins of Marxian centralism emerge from problems around the *formation of the national state*. Until well into the latter half of the 19th century, Germany and Italy were divided into a multitude of independent duchies, principalities, and kingdoms. The consolidation of these geographic units into unified nations, Marx and Engels believed, was a *sine qua non* for the development of modern industry and capitalism. Their praise of centralism is engendered not by any centralistic mystique but by the problems of the period in which they lived: the development of technology, trade, a unified working class and the national state. Their concern on this score, in short, is with the emergence of capitalism, with the tasks of the bourgeois revolution in an era of unavoidable material scarcity. Marx's approach to a "proletarian revolution," on the other hand, is markedly different. He enthusiastically praises the Paris Commune as a "model to all the industrial centers of France." This regime," he writes, "once established in Paris and the secondary centers, the old centralized government would in the provinces, too, have to give way to the *self-government of the producers.*" [Our emphasis.] The unity of the nation, to be sure, would not disappear and a central government would exist during the transition to communism, but its functions would be limited.

Our object is not to bandy about quotations from Marx and Engels, but emphasize how key tenets of Marxism–which are accepted so uncritically today–were in fact the product of a time that has long been transcended by the development of capitalism in the United States and western Europe. In his day, Marx was occupied not only with the problems of the "proletarian revolution" but also with the problems of the bourgeois revolution, particularly in Germany, Spain, Italy, and eastern Europe. He dealt not only with problems of transition from capitalism to socialism in capitalist countries which had not advanced much beyond the coal-steel technology of the Industrial Revolution; he was also concerned with the problems of transition from feudalism to capitalism in countries which had scarcely advanced much beyond handicrafts and the guild system. To state these concerns more broadly: Marx was occupied above all with the *preconditions* of freedom (technological development, national unification, material abundance) rather than the *conditions* of freedom (decentralization, the formation of communities, the human scale, direct democracy). His theories were still anchored in the realm of *survival*, not the realm of *life*.

power it has to achieve a social revolution. Up to now, the achievement of this consciousness has been blocked continually by the fact that the factory milieu is one of the most entrenched arenas of the work ethic, of hierarchical systems of management, of obedience to leaders, and in recent times, of production committed to superfluous commodities and armaments. The factory serves not only to "discipline," "unite," and "organize" the workers, but to achieve this in a thoroughly bourgeois fashion. In the factory, capitalistic production not only renews the social relations of capitalism with each working day, as Marx observed, but it also renews the psyche, values, and ideology of capitalism.

Marx sensed this fact sufficiently to look for reasons more compelling than the mere fact of exploitation or conflicts over wages and hours to propel the proletariat into revolutionary action. In his general theory of capitalist accumulation he tried to delineate the harsh, objective laws that force the proletariat to assume a revolutionary role. Accordingly he developed his famous theory of immiseration: competition between capitalists compels them to undercut each others' prices, which in turn leads to a continual reduction of wages and the absolute impoverishment of the workers. The proletariat is compelled to revolt because with the process of competition and the centralization of capital "grows the mass of misery, oppression, slavery, degradation."*

But capitalism has not stood still since Marx's day. Writing in the middle years of the 19th century, Marx could not be expected to grasp the full consequences of his insights into the centralization of capital and the development of technology. He could not be expected to foresee that capitalism would develop not only from mercantilism into the dominant industrial form of his day, from State-aided trading monopolies into highly competitive industrial units; but further, that with the centralization of capital it returns to its mercantilist origins on a higher level of

who has nothing to sell but his labor power. It is true that Marx defined the proletariat in these terms but he also worked out a historical dialectic in the development of the proletariat. The proletariat developed out of a propertyless, exploited class, reaching its most "mature" form in the *industrial* proletariat. This class, according to Marx, was the most advanced form, corresponding to the most advanced form of capital. In the late years of his life, Marx came to despise the Parisian workers, who were engaged preponderently in the production of luxury goods, citing "our German workers"–the most robot-like in Europe–as the "model" proletariat of the world.

*The attempt to describe Marx's immiseration theory in international terms instead of national (as Marx did) is sheer subterfuge. In the first place, this theoretical legerdemain simply tries to sidestep the reasons why immiseration has not occurred within the industrial strongholds of capitalism, the *only areas which form a technologically adequate point of departure for a classless society*. If we are to pin our hopes on the colonial world as "the proletariat," this position conceals a very real danger: genocide. America and her recent ally, Russia, have all the technical means to bomb the underdeveloped world into submission. This threat lurks on the historical horizon–the development of the United States into a truely fascist imperium of the Nazi type. It is sheer rubbish to say that this country is a "paper tiger." It is a thermonuclear tiger and the American ruling class, owing to the absence of any cultural restraints, is capable of being even more vicious than the German.

development and reassumes the State-aided monopolistic form. The economy tends to merge with the State and capitalism begins to "plan" its development instead of leaving it exclusively to the interplay of competition and market forces. The system, to be sure, does not abolish the class struggle but manages to contain it, using its immense technological resources to assimilate the most strategic sections of the working class.

Thus the full thrust of the immiseration theory is blunted and in the United States the class struggle in the traditional sense fails to develop into the class war. It remains entirely within a bourgeois dimension. Marxism, in fact, becomes ideology. It is assimilated by the most advanced forms of the state capitalist development—notably, Russia. By an incredible irony of history, Marxian "socialism" turns out to be in large part the very state capitalism that Marx failed to anticipate in the dialectic of capitalism.* The proletariat, instead of developing into a revolutionary class within the womb of capitalism, turns out to be an organ within the body of bourgeois society.

The question we must ask at this late date in history is whether a social revolution that seeks to achieve a classless society can emerge from a conflict between traditional classes in a class society? Or whether such a social revolution can only emerge from the decomposition of the traditional classes, indeed, from the emergence of an entirely new "class" *whose very essence is that it is a non-class*, a growing stratum called the *revolutionary*? In trying to answer this question, we can learn more by returning to the broader dialectic which Marx developed for human society as a whole than by the model he borrowed from the passage of feudal into capitalist society. Just as primitive kinship clans began to differentiate into classes, so in our own day there is a *tendency* for classes to decompose into entirely new subcultures which bear a resemblence to noncapitalist forms of relationships. These are not strictly economic groups anymore; in fact, they reflect the tendency of the social development to transcend the economic categories of scarcity society. They constitute, in effect, a cultural pre-formation in an extremely crude, even ambiguous form, of the movement of scarcity society into post-scarcity phases.

The process of class decomposition must be understood in all its dimensions. The word "process" must be emphasized, here: the traditional classes do not disappear, nor for that matter does the class struggle. Only a social revolution can remove the prevailing class structure and the conflicts it engenders. The point is that the traditional class struggle ceases to have revolutionary implications; it reveals itself as the physiology of the prevailing society, not as the labor pains of birth. In fact, the traditional class struggle forms a precondition for the stability of capitalist society by "correcting" its abuses (wages, hours, inflation, employment, etc.). The unions constitute themselves into a counter-"monopoly" to the industrial monopolies and are incorporated into the neo-mercantilist, statified economy as an estate. Within this estate there are lesser or greater conflicts, but taken as a whole they strengthen the system and serve to perpetuate it.

*Lenin sensed this and described "socialism" as "nothing but state capitalist monopoly *made to benfit the whole people*." (Cf. Lenin's "The Threatening Catastrophe and How to Fight It," *Collected Works*, Vol. XXI, pg. 157.) This is an extraordinary statement, if one thinks out its implications—and a mouthful of contradictions.

Trotsky's "good intentions" aside. By destroying the power of the factory committees in industry and by crushing the Makhnovtsy, the Petrograd workers, and the Kronstadt sailors, the Bolsheviks virtually guaranteed the triumph of the Russian bureaucracy over Russian society. The centralized party—a completely bourgeois institution—became the refuge of counterrevolution in its most sinister form. This was the *covert* counterrevolution that draped itself in the red flag and the terminology of Marx. Ultimately, what the Bolsheviks suppressed in 1921 was not an "ideology" or a "White Guard conspiracy," but an elemental struggle of the Russian people to free themselves of their shackles and take control of their own destiny.* For Russia, this meant the nightmare of Stalinist dictatorship; for the generation of the thirties it meant the horror of fascism and the treachery of the Communist parties in Europe and the United States.

THE TWO TRADITIONS

It would be incredibly naive to suppose that Leninism was the aberrent product of a single man. The disease lies much deeper, not only in the limitations of Marxian theory but in the limitations of the social era that produced Marxism. If this is not clearly understood, we will remain as blind to the dialectic of events today as Marx, Engels, Lenin, and Trotsky were in their own day. For us, this blindness will be all the more reprehensible because behind us lies a wealth of experience that these men lacked sorely in developing their theories.

Karl Marx and Fredrich Engels were centralists—not only politically, but socially and economically. They never denied this fact and their writings are studded with gleaming encomiums to political, organizational, and economic centralization. As early as March, 1850, in the famous *Address to the Central Council to the Communist League*, they call upon the workers to strive not only for "the single and indivisible German republic, but also strive in it for the most decisive centralization of power in the hands of the state authority." Lest the demand be taken lightly, it is repeated continually in the same paragraph, which concludes: "As in France in 1793, so today in Germany the carrying through of the strictest centralization is the task of the really revolutionary party."

*In interpreting this elemental movement of the Russian workers and peasants as a series of "White Guard conspiracies," "acts of kulak resistance," and "plots of international capital," the Bolsheviks reached an incredible theoretical low and deceived no one but themselves. A spiritual erosion developed in the party that paved the way for the politics of the secret police, for character assassination, and finally for the Moscow Trials and the annihilation of the Old Bolshevik cadre. One sees the return of this odious mentality in P.L. articles like "Marcuse: Cop-Out or Cop?" – the theme of which is to establish Marcuse as an agent of the C.I.A. (See *Progressive Labor*, February, 1969.) The article has a caption under a photograph of demonstrating Parisians which reads: "Marcuse got to Paris too late to stop the May action." Opponents of P.L. are invariably described by this rag as "red-baiters" and "anti-worker." If the American Left does not repudiate this police approach and character assassination, it will pay bitterly in the years to come.

problems of his party in *social* contradictions, found himself literally playing an *organizational* "numbers game" in a last-ditch attempt to arrest the very bureaucratization he had himself created. There is nothing more pathetic and tragic than Lenin's last years. Paralyzed by a simplistic body of Marxist formulas, he can think of no better countermeasures than organizational ones. He proposes the formation of the Workers' and Peasants' Inspection to correct bureaucratic deformations in the Party and State–which body falls under Stalin's control and becomes highly bureaucratic in its own right. Lenin then suggests that the size of the Workers' and Peasants' Inspection be reduced and that it be merged with the Control Commission. He advocates enlarging the Central Committee. Thus it rolls along: this body to be enlarged, that one to be merged with another, still a third to be modified or abolished. The strange ballet of organizational forms continues up to his very death, as though the problem could be resolved by organizational means. As Mosche Lewin, an obvious admirer of Lenin, admits: the Bolshevik leader "approached the problems of government more like a chief executive of a strictly 'elitist' turn of mind. He did not apply methods of social analysis to the government and was content to consider it purely in terms of organizational methods."

If it is true that in the bourgeois revolutions that "phrase went beyond the content," in the Bolshevik revolution the forms replaced the content. The soviets replaced the workers and their factory committees, the Party replaced the soviets, the Central Committee replaced the Party, and the Political Bureau replaced the Central Committee. In short, means replaced ends. This incredible substitution of form for content is one of the most characteristic traits of Marxism-Leninism. In France, during the May-June events, all the Bolshevik organizations were prepared to destroy the Sorbonne student assembly in order to increase their influence and membership. Their principal concern was not for the revolution or the authentic social forms created by the students, but the growth of their own parties. In the United States, an identical situation exists in P.L.'s relationship with S.D.S.

Only one force could have arrested the growth of bureaucracy in Russia: a *social* force. Had the Russian proletariat and peasantry succeeded in increasing the domain of self-management through the development of viable factory committees, rural communes, and free soviets, the history of the country might have taken a dramatically different turn. There can be no question that the failure of socialist revolutions in Europe after the First World War led to the isolation of the revolution in Russia. The material poverty of Russia, coupled with the pressure of the surrounding capitalist world, clearly militated against the development of a consistently libertarian, indeed, a socialist society. But by no means was it ordained that Russia had to develop along state capitalist lines; contrary to Lenin's and Trotsky's expectations, the revolution was defeated by *internal* forces, not by the invasion of armies from abroad. Had the movement from below restored the initial achievements of the revolution in 1917, a multifaceted social structure might have developed, based on workers' control of industry, on a freely developing peasant economy in agriculture, and on a living interplay of ideas, programs, and political movements. At the very least, Russia would have not been imprisoned in totalitarian chains and Stalinism would not have poisoned the world revolutionary movement, paving the way for fascism and World War II.

The development of the Bolshevik Party, however, precluded this development. Lenin's or

To reinforce this class structure by babbling about the "role of the working class," to reinforce this traditional class struggle by imputing a "revolutionary" content to it, to infect the new, revolutionary movement of our time with "workeritis" is *reactionary to the core*. How often do the Marxian doctrinaires have to be reminded that the history of the class struggle is the history of a disease, of the wounds opened by the famous "social question," of man's one-sided development in trying to gain control over nature by dominating his fellow man? If the byproduct of this disease has been technological advance, the main product has been repression, a horrible shedding of human blood and a terrifying distortion of the human psyche.

As the disease approaches its end, as the wounds begin to heal in their deepest recesses, the process now unfolds toward wholeness; the *revolutionary* implications of the class struggle lose their meaning as a theoretical construct and social reality. The process of decomposition embraces not only the traditional class structure but also the patriarchal family, authoritarian modes of upbringing, the influence of religion, the institutions of the State, the mores built around toil, renunciation, guilt, and repressed sexuality. *The process of disintegration, in short, now becomes generalized and cuts across virtually all the traditional classes, values, and institutions. It creates entirely new issues, modes of struggle, forms of organization and calls for an entirely new approach to theory and praxis.*

What does this mean concretely? Let us contrast two approaches, the Marxian and the revolutionary. The Marxian doctrinaire would have us approach the worker–or better, "enter" the factory–and proselytize him in "preference" to anyone else. The purpose?–to make the worker "class conscious." To cite the most Neanderthal example (P.L.'s of course): one cuts one's hair, grooms oneself in conventional sports clothing, abandons pot for cigarettes and beer, dances conventionally, and affects "rough" mannerisms. In P.L., one develops a humorless, deadpan, and pompous mein.*

One becomes, in short, what the worker is at his most caricaturized worst: not a "petty bourgeois degenerate," to be sure, but a *bourgeois* degenerate. One becomes an imitation of the worker insofar as the worker is an imitation of his masters. Beneath this metamorphosis of the P.L. student into the P.L. "worker" lies a vicious cynicism. One tries to use the discipline inculcated by the factory milieu to discipline the worker to the Party milieu. One tries to use the worker's respect for the industrial hierarchy to wed the worker to the Party hierarchy. This disgusting process, which if successful could lead only to the substitution of one hierarchy by another, is achieved by pretending to be concerned with the worker's economic, day-to-day demands. Even Marxian theory is degraded to this debased image of the worker. (See almost any copy of "Challenge"–the "New York Inquirer" of the "left." Nothing bores the worker more than this kind of shit literature.) In the end, the worker is shrewd enough to know that he will get better results in the day-to-day class struggle through his union bureaucracy than through a Marxian party bureaucracy. The thirties revealed this so dramatically that within a year or two, unions succeeded

*On this score, P.L. projects its own Neanderthal image on the American worker. Actually, this image more closely approximates the character of the union bureaucrat and Stalinist commissar.

in kicking out "Marxians" by the thousands (with hardly any protest from the rank-and-file) who had done spade-work in the labor movement for more than a decade, even rising to the top leadership of the C.I.O internationals.

The worker becomes a *revolutionary* not by becoming more of a worker but by undoing his "workerness." And in this he is not alone; the same applies to the farmer, the student, the clerk, the soldier, the bureaucrat, the professional—and the Marxist. The worker is no less a "bourgeois" than the farmer, student, clerk, soldier, bureaucrat, professional—and Marxist. His "workerness" is the *disease* he is suffering from, the social affliction telescoped to individual dimensions. Lenin understood this in *What Is To Be Done?* but he smuggled in the old hierarchy under a red flag and revolutionary verbiage. The worker begins to become a revolutionary when he undoes his "workerness," when he comes to detest his class status here and now, when he begins to disgorge exactly those features which the Marxists most prize in him: his work ethic, his characterology derived from industrial discipline, his respect for hierarchy, his obedience to leaders, his consumerism, his vestiges of puritansim. In this sense, the worker becomes a revolutionary to the degree that he sheds his class status and achieves an *un*-class consciousness. He degenerates—and he degenerates magnificently. What he is shedding are precisely those *class* shackles that bind him to *all* systems of domination. He abandons those *class* interests that enslave him to consumerism, suburbia, and a bookkeeping conception of life.*

The most promising development in the factories today is the emergence of young workers who smoke pot, fuck-off on their jobs, drift into and out-of factories, grow long or longish hair, demand more leisure time rather than more pay, steal, harass all authority figures, go on wildcats, and turn on their fellow workers. Even more promising is the emergence of this human type in trade schools and high schools, the reservoir of the industrial working class to come. To the degree that workers, vocational students, and high school students link their life-styles to various aspects of the anarchic youth culture, to that degree will the proletariat be transformed from a force for the conservation of the established order into a force for revolution.

*The worker, in this sense, begins to approximate the socially transitional human types who provided history with its most revolutionary elements. Generally, the "proletariat" has been most revolutionary in transitional periods, when it was least "proletarianized" psychically by the industrial system. The great foci of the classical workers' revolutions were Petrograd and Barcelona, where the workers had been directly uprooted from a peasant background, and Paris, where they were still anchored in crafts or came directly from a craft background. These workers had the greatest difficulty in acclimating themselves to industrial domination and became a continual source of social and revolutionary unrest.

By contrast, the stable, hereditary working class tended to be surprisingly non-revolutionary. Even in the much-cited case of the German workers (which, as we know, had been cited by Marx and Engels as models for the European proletariat), the majority did not support the Spartacists in 1919. They returned large majorities of official Social Democrats to the Congress of Workers' Councils, to the Reichstag in later years, and rallied consistently behind the Social Democratic Party right up to 1933.

anarchosyndicalist tendencies among the Bolsheviks reached a point where a bloc of oppositional groups, oriented toward these issues, gained 124 seats at a Moscow provincial conference as against 154 for supporters of the Central Committee.

On March 2, 1921, the "Red sailors" of Kronstadt rose in open rebellion, raising the banner of a "Third Revolution of the toilers." The Kronstadt program centered around demands for free elections to the soviets, freedom of speech and press for the anarchists and Left Socialists parties, free trade unions, and the liberation of all prisoners who belonged to Socialist parties. The most shameless stories were fabricated by the Bolsheviks to account for this uprising, which in later years were acknowledged as brazen lies. The revolt was characterized as a "White Guard plot," this despite the fact that the great majority of Communist Party members in Kronstadt joined the sailors—*precisely as Communists*—denouncing the party leaders as betrayers of the October Revolution. As Robert Vincent Daniels observes in his study of Bolshevik oppositional movements: "Ordinary Communists were indeed so unreliable . . . that the government did not depend upon them, either in the assault on Kronstadt itself or in keeping order in Petrograd, where Kronstadt's hopes for support chiefly rested. The main body of troops employed were Chekists and officer cadets from Red Army training schools. The final assault on Kronstadt was led by the top officialdom of the Communist Party—a large group of delegates at the Tenth Party Congress was rushed from Moscow for this purpose." So weak was the regime internally that the elite had to do its own dirty work.

Even more significant than the Kronstadt revolt was the strike movement that developed among the Petrograd workers, a movement that sparked the uprising of the sailors. Leninist histories do not recount this critically important development. The first strikes broke out in the Troubotchny factory on February 23, 1921. Within a matter of days, the movement swept in one factory after another until, by February 28, the famous Putilov works—the "crucible of the Revolution"—went on strike. Not only were economic demands raised but workers raised distinctly political ones, anticipating all the demands that were to be raised by the Kronstadt sailors a few days later. On February 24, the Bolsheviks declared a "state of siege" in Petrograd and arrested the strike leaders, suppressing the workers' demonstrations with officer cadets. The fact is that the Bolsheviks did not merely suppress a "sailors' mutiny"; they crushed by armed force the working class itself. It was at this point that Lenin demanded the banning of factions in the Russian Communist Party. Centralization of the party was now complete—and the way was paved for Stalin.

We have discussed these events in detail because they lead to a conclusion that our latest crop of Marxist-Leninists tend to avoid: the Bolshevik Party reached its maximum degree of centralization in Lenin's day *not to achieve a revolution or suppress a White Guard counter-revolution, but to effect a counterrevolution of its own against the very social forces it professed to represent*. Factions were prohibited and a monolithic party created not to prevent a "capitalist restoration" but to contain a mass movement of workers for soviet democracy and social freedom. The Lenin of 1921 stood opposed to the Lenin of October, 1917.

Thereafter, Lenin simply floundered. This man, who above all others sought to anchor the

be set up at all; something else will be set up–state capitalism." In the "interests of socialism," the Bolshevik party elbowed the proletariat out of every domain it had conquered by its own efforts and initiative. The party did not coordinate the revolution or even lead it; it dominated it. First, workers' control, later union control, was replaced by an elaborate hierarchy, as monstrous as any structure that existed in pre-revolutionary times. As later years were to demonstrate, Osinsky's prophecy became bitter reality with a vengeance.

The problem of "who is to prevail"–the Bolsheviks or the Russian "masses"–was by no means limited to the factories. The issue reappeared in the countryside as well as the cities. A sweeping peasant war had buoyed up the movement of the workers. Countrary to official Leninist accounts, the agrarian upsurge was by no means limited to a redistribution of the land into private plots. In the Ukraine, peasants influenced by the anarchist militias of Nestor Makhno established a multitude of rural communes, guided by the communist maxim: "From each according to his ability; to each according to his needs." Elsewhere, in the north and in Soviet Asia, several thousand of these organisms were established partly on the initiative of the Left Social Revolutionaries and in large measure as a result of traditional collectivist impulses which stemmed from the Russian village, the *mir*. It matters little whether these communes were numerous or embraced large numbers of peasants; the point is that they were authentic popular organisms, the nuclei of a moral and social spirit that ranged far above the dehumanizing values of bourgeois society.

The Bolsheviks frowned upon these organisms from the very beginning and eventually condemned them. To Lenin, the preferred, the more "socialist" form of agricultural enterprise was represented by the State Farm: literally, an agricultural factory in which the State owned the land and farming equipment, appointing managers who hired peasants on a wage basis. One sees in these attitudes toward workers' control and agricultural communes the essentially *bourgeois* spirit and mentality that permeated the Bolshevik Party–a spirit and mentality that emanated not only from its theories, but from its corporate mode of organization. In December, 1918, Lenin launched an attack against the communes on the pretext that peasants were being "forced" to enter them. Actually, little if any coercion was used to organize these communistic forms of self-management. As Robert G. Wesson, who studied the Soviet communes in detail, concludes: "Those who went into communes must have done so largely of their own volition." The communes were not suppressed but their growth was discouraged until Stalin merged the entire development in the forced collectivization drives of the late twenties and early thirties.

By 1920, the Bolsheviks had isolated themselves from the Russian working class and peasantry. The elimination of workers' control, the suppression of the Makhnovtsy, the restrictive political atmosphere in the country, the inflated bureaucracy, the crushing material poverty inherited from the civil war years–all, taken together, generated a deep hostility toward Bolshevik rule. With the end of hostilities, a new movement surged up from the depths of Russian society for a "Third Revolution"–not a restoration of the past, but a deep-felt desire to realize the very goals of freedom, economic as well as political, that had rallied the "masses" around the Bolshevik program of 1917. The new movement found its most conscious form in the Petrograd proletariat and the Kronstadt sailors. It also found expression in the party: the growth of anti-centralist and

A qualitatively new situation emerges when man is faced with a transformation from a repressive, class society, based on material scarcity, into a liberatory, classless society, based on material abundance. From the decomposing traditional class structure, a new human type is created in ever-increasing numbers: the *revolutionary*. This revolutionary begins to challenge not only the economic and political premises of hierarchical society, but hierarchy as such. He raises not only the need for social revolution but tries to *live* in a revolutionary manner to the degree that this is possible in the existing society.* He attacks not only the forms created by the legacy of domination, but improvises new forms of liberation which take their poetry from the future.

This preparation for the future, this experimentation with liberatory, post-scarcity forms of social relations, may be illusory if the future involves a substitution of one class society by another; it is indispensable, however, if the future involves a classless society built on the *ruins* of a class society. What, then, will be the "agent" of revolutionary change? Literally, the great majority of society, drawn from all the different traditional classes and funded into a common revolutionary force by the decomposition of the institutions, social forms, values, and life-styles of the prevailing class structure. Typically, its most advanced elements are the youth–a generation, today, that has known no chronic economic crisis, that is less and less oriented toward the myth of material security so widespread among the generation of the thirties.

If it is true that a social revolution cannot be achieved without the active or passive support of the workers, it is no less true that it cannot be achieved without the active or passive support of the farmers, technicians, and professionals. Above all, a social revolution cannot be achieved without the

*This revolutionary life style may develop in the factories as well as on the streets, in schools as well as in crashpads, in the suburbs as well as the Bay Area-East Side axis. Its essence is defiance, and a personal "propaganda of the deed" that erodes all the mores, institutions, and shibboleths of domination.

As society begins to approach the threshold of the revolutionary period, the factories, schools, and neighborhoods become the actual arena of revolutionary "play"–a "play" that has a very serious core. Strikes become a chronic condition and are called for their own sake, to break the veneer of routine, to defy the society on an almost hourly basis, to shatter the mood of bourgeois normality. This new mood of the workers, students, and neighborhood people is a vital precursor to the actual moment of revolutionary transformation. Its most conscious expression is the demand for "self-management"; the worker refuses to be a "managed" being, a *class* being. This is an eminently revolutionary demand even if it takes its point of departure from the factory, the economic arena of the arena of survival. Unless the worker can "manage" his job, he cannot begin to transcend it or the work ethic in *real* life. Unless this management takes the form of *self*-management, he cannot be a "self," a being whose everyday life is liberated.

This process was most evident, historically, in the Paris Commune and especially in Spain, on the eve of the 1936 revolution, when workers in almost every city and town called strikes "for the hell of it,"–to express their independence, their sense of awakening, their break with the social order and with bourgeois conditions of life. This was also an essential feature of the 1968 general strike in France.

support of the youth, from which the ruling class recruits its armed forces. If the ruling class retains its armed might, the revolution is lost *no matter how many workers rally to its support*. This has been vividly demonstrated not only by Spain in the thirties but by Hungary in the fifties and Czechoslovakia in the sixties. The revolution of today–by its very nature, indeed, in its *pursuit of wholeness*–wins not only the soldier and the worker, *but the very generation from which soldiers, workers, technicians, farmers, scientists, professionals, and even bureaucrats have been recruited*. Discarding the tactical handbooks of the past, the revolution of the future follows the path of least resistance, eating its way into the most susceptible areas of the population, irrespective of their "class position." It is nourished by *all* the contradictions in bourgeois society, not by preconceived ones borrowed from the 1860's and 1917. Hence it attracts all those who feel the burdens of exploitation, poverty, racism, imperialism and, yes, those whose lives are frustrated by consumerism, suburbia, the mass media, the family, school, supermarket, and the prevailing system of repressed sexuality. Here the form of the revolution becomes as totalistic as its content: classless, propertyless, hierarchyless, and *wholly* liberating.

To barge into this revolutionary development with the worn recipies of Marxism, to babble about a "class analysis" and the "role of the working class" amounts to subverting the present and future by the past. To elaborate this deadening ideology by babbling about "cadres," a "vanguard party," "democratic centralism" and the "proletarian dictatorship" is sheer counterrevolution. It is this matter of the "organizational question"–this vital contribution of Leninism to Marxism–that we must now direct some attention.

THE MYTH OF THE PARTY

Social revolutions are not "made" by "parties," groups, or cadres; they occur as a result of deep-seated historic forces and contradictions that activate large sections of the population. They occur not merely (as Trotsky argued) because the "masses" find the existing society intolerable, but also because of the tension between the actual and the possible, between "what *is*" and "what *could* be." Abject misery alone does not produce revolutions; more often than not, it produces an aimless demoralization, or worse, a private, personalized struggle to survive.

The Russian Revolution of 1917 weighs on the brain of the living like a nightmare because it was largely a product of "intolerable conditions," of a devastating imperialistic war. Whatever dreams it had were pulverized by an even bloodier civil war, by famine, and by treachery. What emerged from the revolution were the ruins not of an *old* society but of whatever hopes existed to achieve a *new* one. The Russian Revolution failed miserably; it replaced Tsarism by state capitalism.* The Bolsheviks were the tragic victims of their ideology and paid with their lives in great numbers during the purges of the thirties. To attempt to acquire any unique wisdom from this

*A fact which Trotsky never understood. He never followed through the consequences of his own concept of "combined development" to its logical conclusions. He saw (quite correctly) that Tsarist Russia, the late-comer in the European bourgeois development, necessarily acquired the most

Party–the achievement of "Leninist unity," as it was to be called later–did not occur until 1921, when Lenin succeeded in persuading the Tenth Party Congress to ban factions. By this time, most of the White Guards had been crushed and the foreign interventionists had withdrawn their troops from Russia.

It cannot be stressed too strongly that the Bolsheviks tended to centralize their party to the degree that they became isolated from the working class. This relationship has rarely been investigated in latter-day Leninist circles, although Lenin was honest enough to admit it. The Russian Revolution is not merely the story of the Bolshevik Party and its supporters. Beneath the veneer of official events described by Soviet historians there was another, more basic development–the spontaneous movement of the workers and revolutionary peasants, which later clashed sharply with the bureaucratic policies of the Bolsheviks. With the overthrow of the Tsar in February, 1917, workers in virtually all the factories of Russia spontaneously established factory committees, staking out an increasing claim in industrial operations. In June, 1917, an all-Russian Conference of Factory Committees was held in Petrograd which called for the "organization of thorough control by labor over production and distribution." The demands of this Conference are rarely mentioned in Leninist accounts of the Russian Revolution, despite the fact that the Conference aligned itself with the Bolsheviks. Trotsky, who describes the factory committees as "the most direct and indubitable representation of the proletariat in the whole country," deals with them peripherally in his massive, three-volume history of the revolution. Yet so important were these spontaneous organism of self-management that Lenin, despairing of winning the soviets in the summer of 1917, was prepared to jettison the slogan "All Power to the Soviets" for "All Power to the Factory Committees." This demand would have catapulted the Bolsheviks into a completely anarchosyndicalist position, although it is doubtful that they would have remained there very long.

With the October Revolution, all the factory committees seized control of the plants, ousting the bourgeoisie and completely taking control of industrial operations. In accepting the concept of workers' control, Lenin's famous decree of November 14, 1917, merely acknowledged an accomplished fact; the Bolsheviks dared not oppose the workers at this early date. But they began to whittle down the power of the factory committees. In January, 1918, a scant two months after "decreeing" workers' control, the Bolsheviks shifted the administration of the factories from the committees to the bureaucratic trade unions. The story that the Bolsheviks "patiently" experimented with workers' control, only to find it "inefficient" and "chaotic," is a myth. Their "patience" did not last more than a few weeks. Not only did they end direct workers' control within a matter of weeks after the decree of Novermber 14, but even union control came to an end shortly after it had been established. By the spring of 1918, virtually all Russian industry was placed under bourgeois forms of management. As Lenin put it, the "revolution demands . . . precisely in the interests of socialism that the masses *unquestionably obey the single will* of the leaders of the labor process." Workers' control was denounced not only as "inefficient," "chaotic," and "impractical," but as "petty bourgeois"!

The Left Communist Osinsky bitterly denounced all of these spurious claims and warned the party: "Socialism and socialist organization must be set up by the proletariat itself, or they will not

decisions are made, the more conservative is the nature of the decision-making process, the more bureaucratic and extraneous are the factors which come into play, the more considerations of prestige and retrenchment supplant creativity, imagination, and a disinterested dedication to revolutionary goals.

The result is that the party becomes *less* efficient from a revolutionary point of view the more it seeks efficiency in hierarchy, cadres, and centralization. Although everyone marches in step, the orders are usually wrong, especially when events begin to move rapidly and take unexpected turns–as they do in all revolutions. The party is efficient in only one respect: in molding society in its own hierarchical image if the revolution is successful. It recreates bureaucracy, centralization, and the State. It fosters the very social conditions which justify this kind of society. Hence instead of "withering away," the State controlled by the "glorious party" preserves the very conditions which "necessitate" the existence of a State–and a party to "guard it."

On the other hand, this kind of party is extremely vulnerable in periods of repression. The bourgeoisie has only to grab its leadership to virtually destroy the entire movement. With its leaders in prison or in hiding, the party becomes paralyzed; the obedient membership has no one to obey and tends to flounder. Demoralization sets in rapidly. The party decomposes not only because of its repressive atmosphere but also because of its poverty of inner resources.

The foregoing account is not a series of hypothetical inferences; it is a composite sketch of all the mass Marxian parties of the past century–the Social Democrats, the Communists, and the Trotskyist party of Ceylon, the only mass party of its kind. To claim that these parties ceased to take their Marxian principles seriously merely conceals another question: why did this happen in the first place? The fact is that these parties were co-opted into bourgeois society because they were structured along bourgeois lines. The germ of treachery existed in them from birth.

The Bolshevik Party was spared this fate between 1904 and 1917 for only one reason: it was an illegal organization during most of the years leading up to the revolution. The party was continually being shattered and reconstituted, with the result that until it took power it never really hardened into a fully centralized, bureaucratic, hierarchical machine. Moreover, it was riddled by factions. This intense factional atmosphere persisted throughout 1917 into the civil war. Nevertheless the Bolshevik leadership was ordinarily extremely conservative, a trait that Lenin had to fight throughout 1917–first, in his efforts to reorient the Central Committee against the Provisional Government (the famous conflict over the "April Theses"), later in driving this body into insurrection in October. In both cases, he threatened to resign from the Central Committee and bring his views to "the lower ranks of the party."

In 1918, factional disputes became so serious over the issue of the Brest-Litovsk Treaty that the Bolsheviks nearly split into two warring Communist parties. Oppositional Bolshevik groups like the Democratic Centralists and the Workers' Opposition waged bitter struggles within the party throughout 1919 and 1920, not to speak of oppositional movements that developed within the Red Army over Trotsky's propensity for centralization. The complete centralization of the Bolshevik

scarcity revolution is ridiculous. What we can learn from the revolutions of the past is what all revolutions have in common and their profound limitations compared with the enormous possibilities that are now open to us.

The most striking feature of the past revolutions is that they began spontaneously. Whether one chooses to examine the opening phases of the French Revolution of 1789, the revolutions of 1848, the Paris Commune, the 1905 revolution in Russia, the overthrow of the Tsar in 1917, the Hungarian Revolution of 1956, the French general strike of 1968, the opening stages are generally the same: a period of ferment that explodes spontaneously into a mass upsurge. Whether the upsurge is successful or not depends on its resoluteness and on whether the State can effectively exercise its armed power–that is, on whether the troops go over to the people.

The "glorious party," when there is one, almost invariable lags behind the events. In February, 1917, the Petrograd organization of the Bolsheviks opposed the calling of strikes precisely on the eve of the revolution which was destined to overthrow the Tsar. Fortunately, the workers ignored the Bolshevik "directives" and went on strike anyway. In the events which followed, no one was more surprised by the revolution than the "revolutionary" parties, including the Bolsheviks. As the Bolshevik leader Kayurov recalled: "Absolutely no guiding initiatives from the party were felt . . . the Petrograd committee had been arrested and the representative from the Central Committee, Comrade Shliapnikov, was unable to give any directives for the coming day." Perhaps this was fortunate: before the Petrograd committee was arrested, its evaluation of the situation and its role were so dismal that, had the workers followed its guidance, it is doubtful if the revolution would have occurred when it did.

The same kind of stories could be told of the upsurges which preceded 1917 and those which

advanced industrial and class forms instead of recapitulating the entire bourgeois development from its beginnings. He neglected to consider that Russia, torn by a tremendous internal upheaval, might even *run ahead* of the capitalist development elsewhere in Europe. Hypnotized by the formula, "nationalized property = socialism," he failed to recognize that monopoly capitalism itself *tends to amalgamate with the State by its own inner dialectic*.

The Bolsheviks, having cleared away the *traditional* forms of bourgeois social organization (which still act as a rein on the state capitalist development in Europe and America, inadvertently prepared the ground for a "pure" state capitalist development in which the State finally becomes the ruling class. Lacking support from a technologically advanced Europe, the Russian Revolution passed into an internal counterrevolution; Soviet Russia became a form of state capitalism that does not "benefit the whole people." Lenin's analogy between "socialism" and state capitalism became a terrifying reality under Stalin.

Despite its humanistic core, Marxism failed to comprehend how much its concept of "socialism" approximates a later stage of capitalism itself: the return to neo-mercantilist forms on a higher industrial level. To fail to understand this development is to create devastating theoretical confusion in the contemporary revolutionary movement, as witness the splits within the Troyskyist movement over this question.

followed. To cite only the most recent: the student uprising and general strike in France during May-June, 1968. There is a convenient tendency to forget that close to a dozen "tightly centralized" Bolshevik-type organizations existed in Paris at this time. It is rarely mentioned that *virtually everyone of these "vanguard" groups were disdainful of the student uprising up to May 7th,* when the street fighting broke out in earnest. The Trotskyist J.C.R. was a notable exception–and it merely coasted along, essentially following the initiatives of the March 22nd Movement.* Up to May 7th, all the Maoist groups criticized the student uprising as peripheral and unimportant; the Trotskyist F.E.R. regarded it as "adventuristic" and tried to get the students to leave the barricades on May 10th; the Communist Party, of course, played a completely treacherous role. Far from leading the popular movement, they were its captives throughout. Ironically, most of these Bolshevik groups were to manipulate shamelessly in the Sorbonne student assembly in an effort to "control" it, introducing a disruptive atmosphere that demoralized the entire body. Finally, to complete the irony, all of these Bolshevik groups were to babble about the need for "centralized leadership" when the popular movement collapsed–a movement that occurred despite their directives and often in opposition to them.

Revolutions and uprisings worthy of any note not only have an initial phase that is magnificiently anarchic but *also tend spontaneously to create their own forms of revolutionary self-management*. The Parisian sections of 1793-94 were the most remarkable forms of self-management to be created by any of the social revolutions in history.† A more familiar form were

*The March 22nd Movement functioned as a catalytic agent in the events, not as a leadership. It did not "command"; it instigated, leaving a free-play to the events. This free play which allowed the students to push ahead on their own momentum was indispensable to the dialectic of the uprising, for without it there would have been no barricades on May 10th, which in turn triggered off the general strike of the workers.

†It is unfortunate that so little has been written about the Parisian sections in English. The sections were neighborhood associations based on face-to-face democracy, not on representation. These extraordinary bodies not only provided the real momentum of the Great French Revolution but they undertook the administration of the entire city. They policed their own neighborhoods, elected their own revolutionary tribunals, were responsible for the distribution of foodstuffs, provided public aid for the poor, and contributed to the maintenance of the National Guard. It must be borne in mind that this complex of extremely important activities was undertaken not by professional bureaucrats, but for the most part by ordinary shopkeepers, workers, and craftsmen. The bulk of sectional responsibilities were discharged after working hours, during the leisure time of the section members. The popular assemblies of the sections usually met during the evenings in neighborhood churches which had been expropriated for their use and were open to all citizens, without property qualifications after the summer of 1792. In periods of emergency, assembly meetings were held daily; normally, they could be called at the request of fifty members. Most administrative responsibilities were discharged by committees, but the popular assemblies established all the policies of the committees, reviewed and passed on their work, and replaced section officers at will. It is not too difficult to surmise why these sections have received very little attention by Marxist theoreticians; they were much too "anarchic" to please the pontiffs of the "Left."

the councils or "soviets," which the Petrograd workers established in 1905. Although less democratic than the sections, the council form was to reappear in a number of revolutions of later years. Still another form of revolutionary self-management were the factory committees which the anarchists established in the Spanish Revolution of 1936. Finally, the sections reappeared as student assemblies and action committees in the May-June uprising and general strike in Paris a year ago.*

We must ask, at this point, what role the "revolutionary" party plays in all of these developments. In the beginning, as we have seen, it tends to have an inhibitory function, not a "vanguard" role. Where it exercises influence, it tends to slow down the flow of events, not "coordinate" the revolutionary forces. This is not accidental. The party is structured along hierarchical lines *that reflect the very society it professes to oppose*. Despite its theoretical pretensions, it is a bourgeois organism, a miniature State, with an apparatus and a cadre, whose function is to *seize* power, not *dissolve* power. Rooted in the pre-revolutionary period, it assimilates all the forms, techniques, and mentality of a bureaucracy. Its membership is schooled in obedience, in the preconceptions of a rigid dogma, and taught to revere the "leadership." The party's leadership, in turn, is schooled in habits born of command, authority, manipulation, and egomania. This situation is worsened when the party participates in parliamentary elections. Owing to the exigencies of election campaigns, the party now models itself completely on existing bourgeois forms and even acquires the paraphanalia of the electoral party. The situation assumes truely crucial proportions when the party acquires large presses, costly headquarters, and a large inventory of centrally controlled periodicals, and develops a paid "apparatus"–in short, a bureaucracy with vested material interests.

As the party expands, the distance between the leadership and the ranks invariably increases. Its leaders not only become "personages," but they lose contact with the living situation below. The local groups, which know their own immediate situation better than any remote leader, are obliged to subordinate their insights to directives from above. The leadership, lacking any direct knowledge of local problems, responds sluggishly and prudently. Although it stakes out a claim to the "larger view," to greater "theoretical competence," the competence of the leadership tends to diminish the higher one ascends the hierarchy of command. The more one approaches the level where the *real*

*With a sublime arrogance that is accountable partly to ignorance, a number of Marxist groups were to dub virtually all of the above forms of self-management as "soviets." The attempt to bring all of these different forms under a single rubric is not only misleading but willfully obscurantist. The actual soviets were the least democratic of the revolutionary forms and the Bolsheviks shrewdly used them to transfer the power to their own party. The soviets were not based on face-to-face democracy, like the Parisian sections or like the Parisian student assemblies of 1968. Nor were they based on economic self-management, like the Spanish anarchist factory committees. The soviets were actually a workers' parliament, hierarchically organized, which drew their representation from factories, later military units and peasant villages. Despite its "class character," the Congress of Soviets was a geographic organism which structurally differed little from the House of Representatives and soon surrendered its power to an executive, staffed by the Bolshevik Party. In short, the soviets were a State which existed *over* the working class, not *of* it.